DECLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON

~~0-85~~ 0-121

EXCISE

January 22, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: CA - Diego C. Asencio

FROM: OCS - Robert B. Lane, Deputy

SUBJECT: Draft letter to Ambassador Hinton reference Sullivan case

Attached is draft re subject for your consideration.

Attachment:

As stated.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 11/29/83

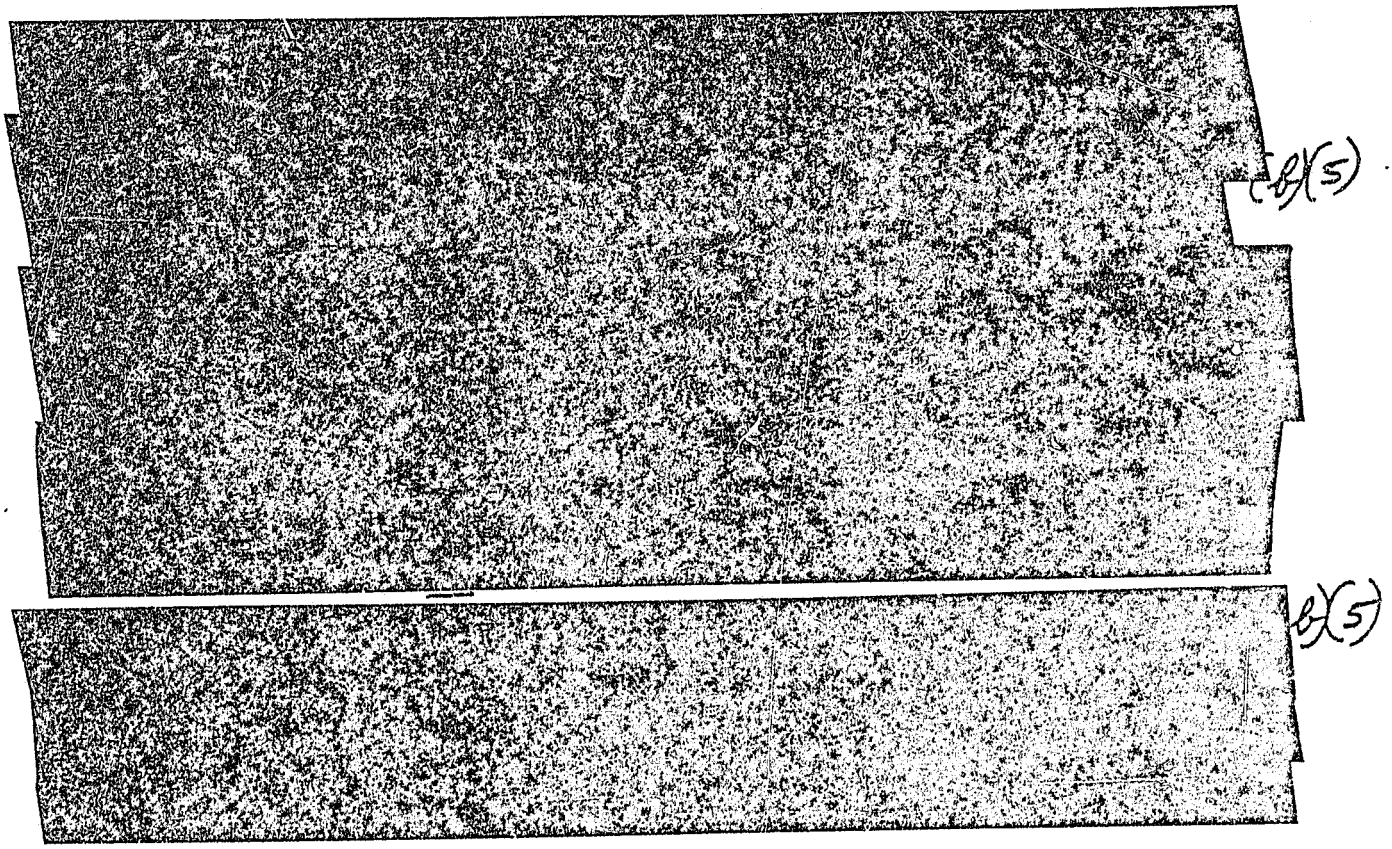
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☐
RELEASE DENIED☑ in part
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS (b)(5)

Draft Roukema ltr. - Comments? BSF

The Honorable
Deane R. Hinton
American Ambassador
San Salvador, El Salvador

[redacted] my revision. A-OK'd. Smooth out as necessary + put in final. BSF

Dear Deane

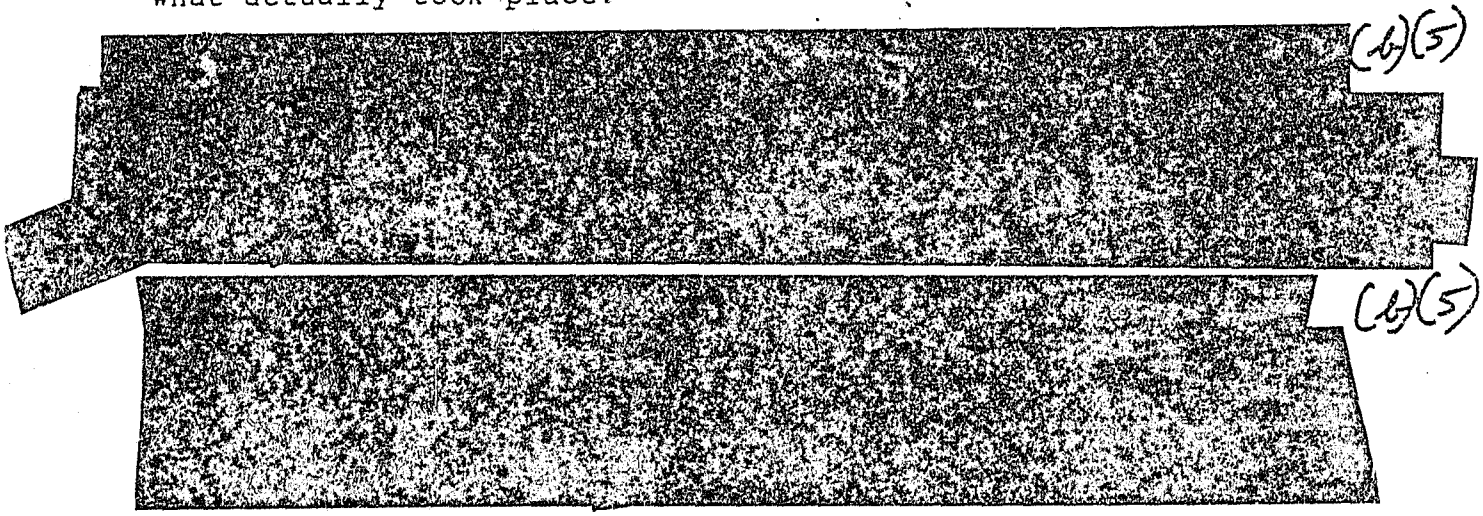


As I understand it, you were asked some questions during a press conference on January 13 about the Sullivan case and responded accurately that the letter received in October appeared to be part of an extortion attempt. Unfortunately, the enclosed UPI story, which was carried in several papers as well as the New York Times, quoted you as saying that both letters were considered extortion attempts. Immediately upon seeing this article both the family and Congresswoman Roukema's office called us, upset over what they perceived as an abrupt decision to write the second letter off as another extortion attempt. Although we called the Embassy immediately, it was not until January 18 that we had in hand the text of your statement and were able to explain to the family what had actually transpired. By this time, however, the letter to the Secretary was on its way and the damage, including some CBS television coverage, was done.

Last week Roukema's office again called the Citizens Emergency Center (EMR) to inquire if someone at the Embassy had stated publicly that the Embassy had recently received a phone call from the author of the first two letters. One of the EMR officers immediately called the Embassy to check that story out

DECLASSIFIED

and was told that the story had no basis in fact; that the Embassy had not received such a phone call and that no Embassy officer had spoken to such a question. I have subsequently learned by cable that that is not a correct understanding of what actually took place.



Sincerely,

Diego C. Asencio

Enclosures:
1. Newspaper article

2. Letters from Congresswoman Roukema

CA/OCS/EMR/JLWard
CA/OCS:RBLane:sas 1/22/82

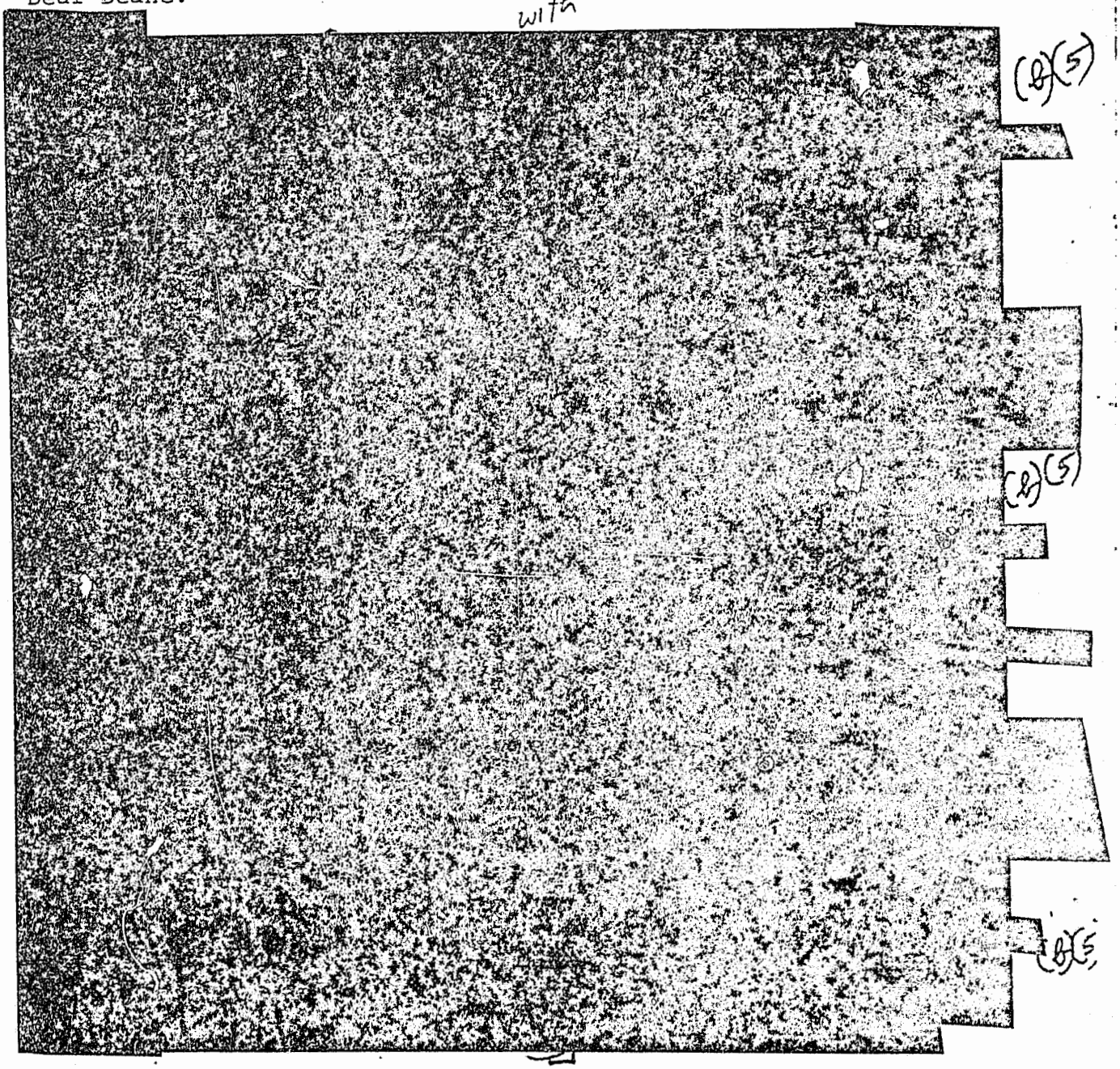
DECLASSIFIED

DRAFT

DRAFT #2
Revised in CA 1/25/85

The Honorable
Deane R. Hinton
American Ambassador
San Salvador, El Salvador

Dear Deane:



As I understand it, you were asked some questions during a press conference on January 13 about the Sullivan case and responded

DECLASSIFIED

accurately that the letter received in October appeared to be part of an extortion attempt. Unfortunately, the enclosed UPI story, which was carried in several papers as well as the New York Times, quoted you as saying that both letters were considered extortion attempts. Immediately upon seeing this article both the family and Congresswoman Roukema's office called us, upset over what they perceived as an abrupt decision ~~on your part~~ to write the second letter off as another extortion attempt. Although we called the Embassy immediately, it was not until January 18 that we had in hand the ~~exact~~ text of your statement ~~to the press~~ and were able to explain to the family what had actually transpired. By this time, however, the letter to the Secretary was on its way and the damage, including some CBS television coverage, was done.

Last week Roukema's office again called the Citizens Emergency Center (EMR) to inquire if someone at the Embassy had stated publicly that the Embassy had recently received a phone call from the author of the first two letters. One of the EMR officers immediately called the Embassy to check that story out and was told that the story had no basis in fact; that the Embassy had not received such a phone call and that no Embassy officer had spoken to such a question. I have subsequently learned by cable from you that that is not a correct ~~your~~ understanding of what actually took place.

[redacted]

(b)(5)

[redacted]

(b)(5)

Sincerely,

Diego C. Asencio

Enclosures:

1. Newspaper article.

2. Letters from Congresswoman Roukema.

CA/OCS/EMR/JLWard/
CA:OCS:RBLane:sas 1/22/82